Survey No. 12-8

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

1. Nam	le (indicate pr	eferred name)		
historic Comu	us, Johnsonville, N	icholsonville or Nic	holson's Crossroad	.s
and/or common	Comus			
2. Loca	ation			
street & number	Intersection of G	omus & Old Hundred R	oade	not for publication

,,		vicinity of	congressional district	3rd
Juic	ryland	county	Montgomery	
3. Clas	sification			
Category X district building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered not applicable	Status _x occupied _ unoccupied _ work in progress Accessible _x yes: restricted _ yes: unrestricted _ no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park x private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Prope	rty (give names an	d mailing addresse	s of <u>all</u> owners)
name ^M ulti	ple ownership- see	listing		
street & number			telephone n	o.:
city, town		state	and zip code	
•	ation of Leg	al Descriptio	n	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc. Montgo	omery County Courthou	ıse	liber
street & number				folio
city, town R	ockville		state 1	Maryland
		in Existing	Historical Surv	reys
title M-NCPP	C Historic Sites Su	ırvey		
d ate 1976		vcy		te county local
depository for su		torian's office		
	ckville	ocor rail b Ortree		Maryland
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7. Des	cription		Survey No. M.12-8	
Condition excellent good fair	deteriorated ruins unexposed	Check one unaltered altered	Check one original site moved date of move	

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

7. Description

Comus is a small crossroads community located in the still rural area of northwestern most Montgomery County, just below the Frederick County line. The proposed district consists of nine late nineteenth through early twentieth century buildings at the intersection of Comus and Old Hundred Roads. They are, for the most part, vernacular residences. One was formerly a commercial structure- a early twentieth century store building- now being used as a residence. There is also a later twentieth century store building and a former dwelling house being used as an Inn. The structures are all frame with the exception of a one and a half story dwelling which is of log construction. There is no typical Comus archiectutal type. Rather, the district is a mix of localized styles.

	 1499 archeology-historic 1599 agriculture 1699 architecture 1799 art 1899 commerce 		literature military music t philosophy politics/government	religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation
Specific	dates	Builder/Architect		·
check:	Applicable Criteria:A and/or Applicable Exception:A		E _ F _ G	
	Level of Significance:	nationalstate	local	

Survey No. M: 12-8

8. Significance

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Comus is significant as representative of the small, rural crossroads communities which developed in northwestern Montgomery County during the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. It began with a farm residence or two and a general merchandise store to which was later added a number of other residences. Comus does not appear to have been self sufficient community. With only a store and a schoolhouse to serve he local farm community, Comus residents must have depended on other, larger towns for additional needs, such as nearby Barnesville which inluded a estation stop along the B&O Railroad.

The architecture of Comus is a variety of localized styles, dating from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth century. Most were probably influenced by the styles of the Victorian era. The majority, however, have undergone changes over the years including the removal of turned post porches, replacement windows and the application of aluminum or asbestos siding, hiding the original woodwork and siding. Comus does inlude a Queen Anne and a small Italianate style dwelling. Most, however, are less easily classified. They are simple, vernacular dwelling houses. The Comus Inn, with its two story, gable roof center gable facade and facade porch, though larger and perhaps more decorative than most, is typical of the architecture found in rural Montgomery County.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. 12-8

Montgomery County Land, Judgment and Will Records- Courthouse Montgomery County Commissioners Tax Assessment Records Martinet & Bond Map of 1865 and Hopkins Atlas of 1879

10. Geographic	al Data			
Acreage of nominated property Quadrangle name UTM References do NOT comple		ences	Quadrang	le scale
A Zone Easting North		B Zone	Easting	Northing
C		D F H		
Verbal boundary description an				
List all states and counties for parties	code	county	ounty boundaries	code
state	code	county		code
11. Form Prepa	red By			
name/title Catherine Crawfor	d			
organization Mont. Co. Hist.	Pres. Comm.	d	late 5/86	
street & number		t	elephone	
city or town		S	Maryland state	

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust

Shaw House

21 State Circle

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(301) 269-2438

RESOURCES.

The main block of the Comus Inn was probably built by Robert Johnson between 1862 when the property was purchased and 1865 when it appears on the Martinet & Bond Map. Joel H. Wolfe purchased the house on a ten acre lot from the Johnson family in March of 1878. The property was then described as that adjoining the lands of Benjamin Johnson and William Sellman (EBP 18/54). The tax assessment records show an improvement value for Joel Wolfe's property of \$315 in 1879 which rose to \$715 in 1885.

In October of 1900, Joel Wolfe sold the property to Levin B. Johnson. It was described as being the "same land on which the said Joel H. Wolfe now resides" (Deed TD 16/224). Between 1901 and 1902 the improvement value of the property jumped considerably from \$600 to \$1000, suggesting that Levin Johnson made one of the additions to the house at this time. In addition to this parcel, Mr. Johnson also owned a 261 acre tract which he farmed.

In August of 1929 Levin Johnson died leaving "my home farm of 261 acres and also the 'Wolfe tract' on which I now reside...." to his eight children (Will PEW 14/283). His personal estate included farm implements and 125 pounds of corn and 300 bushels of wheat (Inventory PEW 15/232). The report of the sale of the real estate following his death merely described the improvements was "a dwelling house and other outbuildings" (Inventory HGC 10/415).

The property was sold in 1936 to Jessie M. Fitzwater of

The property was sold in 1936 to Jessie M. Fitzwater of Washington, D.C. (Deed 628/476). It was sold to John and Jeanette Spates in 1945 and remained in the Spates family until June of 1973 when it was conveyed to Comus Inn, Inc. (Deeds, 987/265 & 4405/550).

The current Comus inn, #23900 Old Hundred Road is a large Victorian vernacular dwelling. The general styling, a two story rectangular main block with a rear ell, a gable roof with a center facade gable and facade porch is typical of the rural Montgomery County house form. This residence, however, is on a larger scale than most, being five bays across and has some more elaborate detailing including rounded arched windows in the gable ends and a two story extended bay window at the side elevation of the rear ell.

The house has a frame, two story, five bay by one bay gable roof main block with a center gable facade and a rear ell with a hip on gable roof that extends up slightly higher than the roof of the main block. The entry is to the center of the facade. A wooden, shed roof porch (not original), supported by plain squared posts runs the length of the facade of both the main block and the side addition. The main block and rear ell are lit by two over two sash windows. At the facade center gable is a single four light rounded arched casement window. Two of these same windows appear in the gable end of the south side elevation. In the north gable end of the main block is an exterior brick

chimney. The windows at the south side of the main block, one up and one down, are towards the rear of the house. The rear two story ell is two bays deep. The bay to the rear is a two story, three sided extending bay. There are six over six sash windows in the first story of the extending bay. At the northern side elevation is a one and a half story, four bay wide wing. On the first story is a single, large bay window. Above it, are four, four over four sash half story windows. To the side of this is another addition of only a single story (enclosed by a fence), To the rear of the ell is a glass enclosed porch or "Florida room." The exterior walls are covered with asbestos shingles and the roof with wooden shingles. Also, west of the house is a log meat house. It is a small, square structure of hewn, chinked logs with a front facing gable roof with a single bay entry.

At the southeast corner of Old Hundred Road and Comus Road is #16725 Comus Road. This is a rural vernacular L-shaped dwelling house. This house was probably built by Zachariah Cooley who purchased a part of the John P. Sellman farm. By 1891, the tax assessment records show an improvement value of \$500. In January of 1898 Zachariah and his wife sold the house on a one acre and twenty-five perch lot to Amos S. Young for \$750 (Deed TD 2/110). Still, at this point in time the improvement value is listed at \$500.

Amos Young never married. He lived here until his death on January 5, 1915. According to his last will and testament his property went to his brother, John L. Young and his sister, Victoria A. Hershey. His personal estate included small farming implements, a wagon and a cider mill. His real estate inventory described his property was one acre and twenty-five perches "improved by a two story dwelling house, containing seven rooms and cellar, stable, hog pen, chicken house and other outbuildings" (Equity #3134, Judgment record 15/449). The trustee's notice of sale also mentioned that the property was "situated in the village of Comus and presents a rare oppurtunity to purchase a nice home with sufficient ground for business purposes (Ibid.).

The house has a two story, frame, three bay by two bay gable roof main block with a rear, two story, two bay deep ell, also with a gable roof. The entrance is to the center of the facade with a single light transom. The windows to either side of the entry are fairly recent, one over one sash replacements. On the second story facade are three, two over two sash windows, with shutters, as are found throughout the house. There are no windows at the eastern side elevation of the main block. On the western side there are two bays on the second story, a bay towards the front of the first story to the rear of which is a one bay by one bay flat roof entry addition. At the eastern elevation of the main block is another one bay by one bay section with a front facing gable roof. Along the eastern elevation

of the rear ell is a shed roof addition with another entry. There are interior, corbelled brick chimneys at both gable ends of the main block and in a gable end of the rear ell. The exterior walls are covered with asbestos shingles and the roof with raised seam metal.

Next door is #16715. This is a small, simplified Italianate style residence. Though most Italianate dwellings have the distinctive flat or low hipped and bracketed roof, some have the less frequently seen, front facing gable roof popularized by the Greek Revival style. This house has Italianate full arched windows with framed windowheads. The house was probably built in the last decades of the nineteenth century by John P. Sellman. It was sold in January of 1903 for \$800 to Henry Kennedy (Deed TD 24/265). The house sat on ninety-four perches. Mr. Kennedy owned the house for over forty-six years, from 1903 until 1949.

This is a two story, frame, three bay by two bay residence with a front facing gable roof. In the gable end is a fixed circular window. The entry with a four panel wooden door and a single light transom is to the eastern side of the facade. To the west of it are two, two over two sash, rounded arched windows with extended framed windowheads. In the second story are three two over two sash windows, also with full arches. The two over two sash windows in the side elevations are plain, square, two over two sash windows. A flat roof wooden porch supported by three Doric columns, with pilasters against the wall, runs the length of the facade. Along the rear elevation is a single story shed roof section. The house has a center, corbelled brick chimney. The exterior walls are covered with weatherboard siding and the roof with raised seam metal. The house appears to be in very good, original condition. Its styling is quite unique for the rural area in which it is located.

On the southeast corner is a small, simple Bungalow dweling. It is a single story frame residence with two facades. From the northern elevation it is three bays wide with a front facing gable roof with a small six over six sash window in the gable end. The entry is slightly off center with a window to either side. A hipped roof wooden porch supported by four squared posts runs the length of the facade. From the western elevation this is a three bay wide, gable roof dwelling with a centrally located entry covered by a gabled hood. To the northern side of the entry is a double window of regular size. To the southern side is a smaller double window. The house has a plain brick chimney at the roof peak just north of center. The exterior walls are covered with asbestos shingles and the roof with composition shingles. It rests on a cinderblock foundation.

According to the real estate inventory of John A. Dillehay who lived here from 1945 until his death in 1971, this is a small Bungalow 26' x 28' consisting of a living room, dining room, kitchen, bedroom and room for a bath. It has

oak hardwood floors and walnut trim. However, it had then no plumbing or running water, no heat and no septic system.

At the northwest corner is #23830 Old Hundred Road and neighboring #23820. The titles for both these properties can be traced back to John W. Nicholson who purchased this property in the early 1870's from the Johnson family. The property was conveyed to Lawrence Nicholson in February of 1875. Lawrence B. Nicholson appears here on the Hopkins Atlas of 1879 with a residence and adjoining store building. As mentioned, the town was at time referred to as Nicholsonville or Nicholson's Crossroad obviously owing to the fact that Mr. Nicholson operated the town's general merchandise store, the only commercial establishment in the community. The tax assessment records for 1876 list under the name of Lawrence Nicholson, an "improved lot in Nicholsonville" with \$200 worth of "stock in trade."

In August of 1880 the property was sold to Mary E.D. Maxwell. Mary Maxwell evidently continued the general merchandise business. By 1885, the tax assessments list \$1,500 worth of "stock in trade." Then, in 1906 there is mention in the tax records of a "new store building." This building is #23820 which sits to the side of the Maxwell residence, #23830.

The Maxwell residence, #23830, is a rural vernacular cross-gable L-shaped dwelling which appears to have been added to a number of times. It was probably built by Mary Maxwell around the turn of the century. The tax assessment records give an improvement value for this property of \$400 from the years beginning in 1897 until 1906.

The facade of the main block is three bays across with the entry to the middle and a two over two sash window to either side. Centered above the three bays on the second story is a single two over two sash window. There are shutters all around. On the facade of the front facing, gabled roof L there is a single window to the northern side on both the first and second stories. In the gable end is a small rectangular casement window. Along the western elevation of the front L is another entry, perpendicular from the first. A wooden shed roof porch supported by three squared posts covers the bays on the facade of the main block only. There is a brick center chimney on the main block. Along the rear elevation is a single story shed addition. At the western side elevation is a triple window and another entry. At the roof of the rear elevation is a shed dormer with a nine light casement window. At the eastern side elevation of the rear shed addition is a small, single story shed roof addition. The exterior walls are covered with asbestos shingles and the roof with composition shingles.

Next door is the former store building, now a private residence. Its rectangular shape and front facing gable roof suggest its function as a commercial structure. It was built circa. 1906, according to the tax records. It is a

two story frame building with a front facing gable roof. To the side elevation is a two story, two bay wide gable roof wing. The two wings cross so the the entry is located on the front facing L, with a two over two sash window to either side. There is a transom over the front door. Above the entry on the second story is a double, two over two sash window. In the gable end is a lunette. On both side elevation of this front wing is one window on the second story towards the front of the building. A frame porch supported by four turned posts, with like pilasters against the wall once ran the length of the facade but has since been removed. The wing to the side elevation of the front L is a two story, two bay by one bay frame, gable roof section. On the first story, to the outside is an entry-way. To the side of it is a one light casement window. On the second story are two, one over one casement windows (modern replacements). In the crux of the two wings is a small brick flue. The exterior walls are covered with asbestos shingles and the roof with raised seam metal.

Next door is a small one and a half story vernacular residence. This dwelling is much earlier than it appears, having undergone renovations. It is a one and a half story two bay by two bay dwelling of log construction covered with frame siding. It has a gable roof which forms the roof of the facade porch, and slopes down in the rear to create a single story, shed-like rear. The entry, with a wooden panel door with two vertical glass panels in the top portion is located at the south side of the facade. To the other side is a six over six sash window with shutters. The porch is supported by iron posts. On the western side elevation there is a single window on the first story towards the front. In the gable end are two smaller windows. Towards the rear, in the shed-like section is a double window. This same window arrangement, excluding the double window to the rear, appears on the eastern side elevation. However, between the two small windows in the gable end is a large, corbelled brick chimney, the base of which is fairly wide for this small dwelling. At the eastern side elevation is a single story, three bay long shed roof addition. At the east end is an entry with two six over six sash windows to the inside. The exterior walls are covered with aluminum siding and the roof with composition shingles.

Next door is a single story frame commercial structure which houses the "Sugarloaf Mountain Market." This is a simple, utilitarian building without ornamentation. It is a long, rectangular, one story three bay building with a gable roof. The entry is to the center of the facade and is covered by a gabled hood. To the eastern side of the entry is a multi-paned store front window.

Next to the store is #23700. This is an 1880's-1890's Queen Anne style residence with facade and side pavilions, extended bay and a multi-gabled roof, all traits of the Queen

Anne style. It is, however void of the finer detailing associated with Queen Anne architecture such as shingles, truned posts, brackets, etc. Perhaps some of these elements have been removed with the additions of siding and replacement porch.

This is a two story, frame, cross gable and hipped roof residence with a front facing T. The entrance is on the front T which is two bays wide and one bay deep. On the first story to the side of the entry is a large, centered bay. One the second story above is a three sided extended bay with a pedimented gable roof. A low shed roof porch supported by iron railings runs the length of the facade of the T and around to the east side to the crossing wing. The eastern side wing extends one bay deep beyond the front T. Here, is located another entry. In both gable ends of either side wing are double windows. The house is lit by one over one sash windows, with shutters. There are small casement windows in the gable ends. The house has a centered brick chimney. The exterior walls are covered with asbestos shingles.

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CURRENT OWNERS

- P-457 16715 Comus Road Louis Strahler Box 449 Rt. 2 Marietta, Ohio 45750
- P-409 16725 Comus Road
 David C. Heisler
 Dickerson, Maryland 20842
- P-347 23900 Old Hundred Road Comus Inn Inc.
- P-413 23830 Old Hundred Road Edward W. & L.I. Maxwell
- P-453 23820 Old Hundred Road Jane L. Corning 10420 Burnt Ember Drive Silver Spring, Maryland 20903
- P-466 23810 Old Hundred Road Elmer C. & M.M. Ward
- P-523 23700 Old Hundred Road (and store building) John S. & R.A. Haines

P-465 Bungalow Raymond S. & M.M. Whipp Boyds, Maryland 20720

HISTORY

Comus is a small, rural crossroads community of primarily late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings of vernacular styling. Comus is and has been a mostly residential community, surrounded by farmland. Throughout its history, commercial enterprise has been limited to a general merchandise store until the coming of the Comus Inn in the early 1970's.

The only buildings at the current crossroads of Comus and Old Hundred Roads on the Martinet & Bond Map of 1865 are the old schoolhouse (Bungalow site), and the residence of Robert Johnson (Comus Inn). In the surrounding area were the residences and/or farms of Benjamin Johnson, Joseph Johnson, W.O. Sellman, Chris Hershey and a number of other Hershey family homesteads.

By the time that Hopkins produced his 1879 Atlas a few buildings had been added. These are three structures apparently belonging to L.B. Nicholson and a schoolhouse. Most significant was his store building which sat back off the southwest corner. This early store building was later replaced in the early twentieth century. Of the buildings here in 1879, only two possibly exist. These are the residence of Robert Johnson and the small, one and a half story log dwelling which must have been the residence of Lawrence Nicholson, adjoining the store lot. The schoolhouse "No. 2," sat on the southeast corner. Thus, basically Comus was then a crossroads providing only the basic needs of the community with a general merchandise store and a school. Barnesville, the closest town of size, was not far off. At that time it included a store, blacksmith shop, a grangers hall, and a number of churches in addition to a station stop along the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad.

Comus appears on the Hopkins Atlas of 1879 as Johnson-ville," undoubtedly named for the Johnson family who occupied a tract which included the present Comus Inn. In 1862 Benjamin Johnson, who appears on both the Martinet & Bond Map of 1865 and Hopkins 1879 Atlas, purchased ten acres of "Happy Choice" from Joseph and Ormer Johnson's larger tract. Robert Johnson later acquired a part of this parcel and built a house (Comus Inn). Although the town appears here as "Johnsonville" in 1879, it was also referred to for awhile a "Nicholsonville" or "Nicholson's Crossroads." An 1878 deed from Robert Johnson to Joel Wolfe makes reference to a spring on the south side of the public road "from which the citizens of Nicholsonville obtain water..." (EBP 18/54). Also, in Guy Jewell's "School's That Were" it cites a May 1882 request for \$550 for a new school at "Nicholson's Crossroads."

Nicholsonville is a reference to the Nicholson family who had a store and residnece here which appears on the 1879 atlas as L.B. Nicholson Store. Perhaps, Mr. Lawrence Nicholson's store included a post office and thus, as postmaster the town may have acquired his name. Evidently though,

all three names were used about the same period since references to each seem to vary back and forth from year to year.

The first reference to appear in the chains of title for the buildings in the town is in a 1884 deed which states that the property in question lies in "Comus" which was then the "name of the post office in the said village" (Deed EBP 30/470). According to local history, Comus was named for Senator Lewis McComas who represented the Sixth Congressional District at the time a post office was first established (Mr. Jack Spates of Comus, MCHS files- Comus).

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM for the

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

	A. A. I. I. C.					······································		·····	
1.	NAME								
	Comus								
	AND/OR HISTORIC: Johnsonv	ille							
2.	LOCATION								
<u> </u>	STREET AND NUMBER:	,		•					
	Comus Road (Rte. 95) and Comus-Hyattstown Road (Rte. 10								
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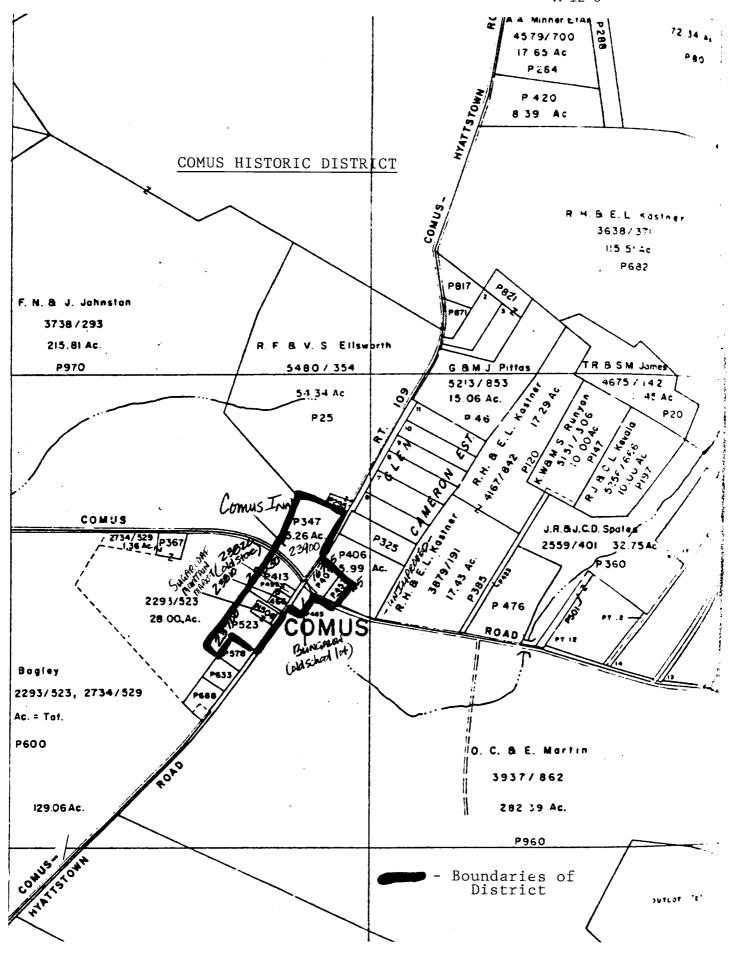
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The town consists of several frame buildings at the intersection of two roads. The Comus Inn has a five bay facade with a central gable and a rear el with a hipped roof and bay window; west of the house is a log meat house. Another house has a three bay, gable end facade with round-arched window heads and hood-mouldings. A 1-1/2 story house is log; it has a porch across the front, the roof of which is integral with the roof house.

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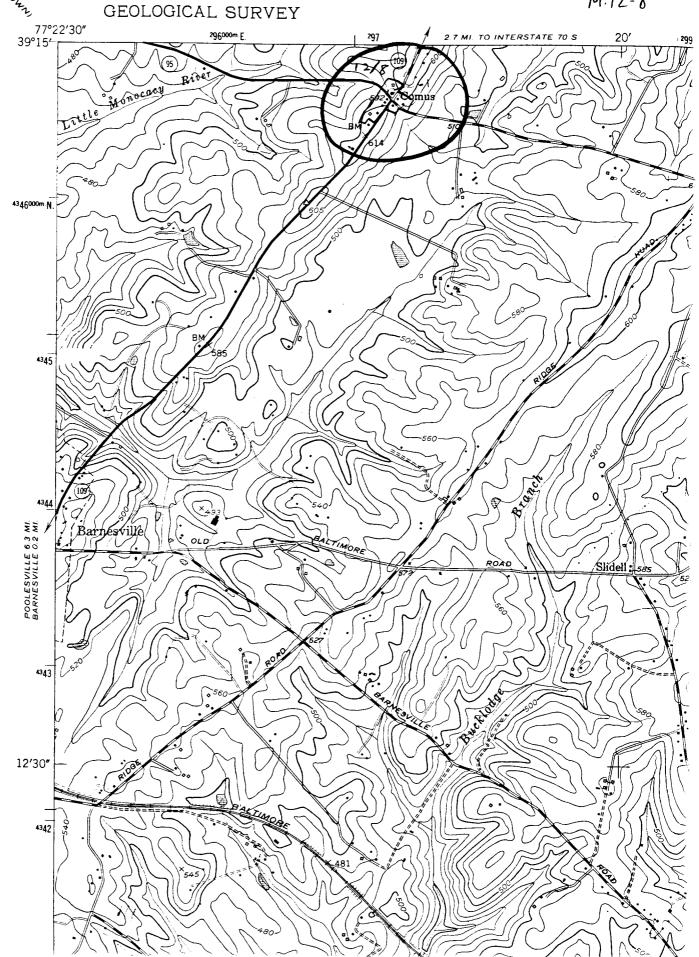
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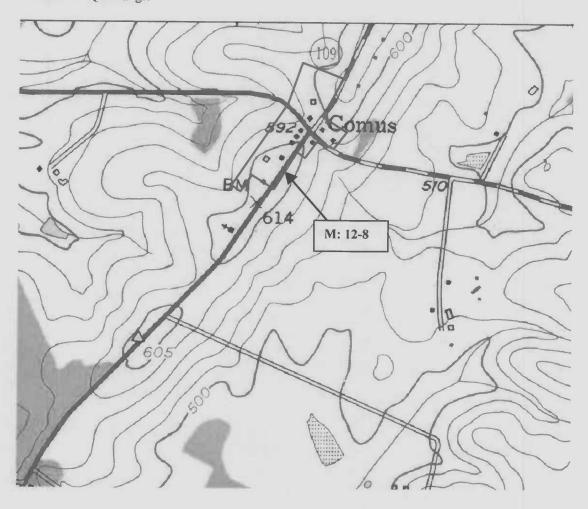
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

M:12-8



M: 12-8 Comus Historic District (Johnsonville, Nicholson's Crossroads) Germantown Quadrangle





#12/8 Comus Historic District 14715 Comus RD. 5/86 M:12-8



12-8 Comus Historic District
DILLEMAY MUNICIPION
CORNER COMUS and OLD HUNDRED
TZOADS
5/86
M:12-8



#12-9 Comus Historic DISTRICT
16725 Comus RD.

M:12-8



#12-8 COMUS HISTORIC DISTRETOT
23830 OLD HUNDRED RD.

M:12-8



#12-8 COMUS HISTORIC DISTRICT
SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN MARKET and
ITAINES I FOUSE, # 23700 OLD
HUNDRED ROAD
M:12-8



NAME Rt 109 comus, Md W of INTERSECTION M:#12-8

LOCATION

FACADE SE

PHOTO TAKEN 4/23/74 MOWYER



NAME
Comus School House | 7TH DAY ADVENT. CHURCH
LOCATION
RI. 109 comus, Md

FACADE
SE
PHOTO TAKEN 4/29/74 MOWYER



M; #12-8 NAME Z. COOLEY LOG HOUSE RUINS LOCATION Rt 109 W. of comus, Md FACADE S PHOTO TAKEN 4/29/14 M DWYER